At their board meeting, on October 29, 2009, the Selectmen signed a resolution adopting a policy of exercising ***GREEN GARDEN PRACTICES*** on town lands in a manner that will contribute to the health and safety of the environment and sustain a balance with nature.

Won't you join your neighbors and pledge? By signing the tally sheet or pledge card you will be joining in ***Save Our Bay***.

Look inside to find out what you can do.

Take the Pledge

Save Our Bay

Harpswell Conservation Commission
Harpswell, Maine

I pledge to minimize my use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and other things that pollute Harpswell waters.

There are alternatives.

See: Harpswell Conservation Commission
Look for **Conservation Commission** in the left column on the Town of Harpswell website [www.harpswell.maine.gov]

Incorporate these practices and you will have a green and healthy lawn that is safe for pets and children to roll in, is wildlife friendly -- and is good for the environment.

Sign up at the Town Office, Recycling Center or **on line** at:
http://www.harpswell.maine.gov/

Harpswell Conservation Commission

263 Mountain Road, Harpswell ME 04079

Photos courtesy of E. Martz & M. A. Nahf

03.01.10

Why you should...

Take the Pledge

Save Our Bay

We know that what happens on the land sooner or later ends up in the water around us, particularly when we speak of the residue of fertilizers and pesticides.

And that as an island community with a limited supply of drinking water, we must be self-sustaining regarding our potable water.

But, did you know approximately 50% of Harpswell's local economy is dependent on fishing, thus healthy marine waters are needed to continue our market supply?

And unneeded fertilizer nutrients are not absorbed. They combine with rainwater and run off into our coastal waters and wetlands.

FOR EXAMPLE

Nitrogen fertilizer not absorbed by a plant runs off into the sea and causes *algal blooms* in the tidal reas along the shore. The excess algae block sunlight needed by eelgrass beds affecting its marine life.

In addition, phosphorus fertilizers running into freshwater, produce excess algae that absorb the oxygen and kill the aquatic species.

NOTE: When *algal blooms* die their decomposition contributes to the water's higher acidity, affecting mollusks. The effects from higher acidity vary by species, but include everything from stunted growth in adults to dissolving shells and death in juveniles.

THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES

IS FERTILIZING NECESSARY?

Established grasses can get their needed nitrogen from clippings.

- Mow high +3 ½" and leave the clippings.

Fortunately, Harpswell's soils are naturally high in phosphorus so adding phosphorus fertilizer isn't necessary

AND WHAT ABOUT LAWN WATERING?

Grass grows its roots to a depth equal to its height and deeper roots need less additional watering.

In dry weather, established grass does not die when it turns brown. It is dormant and will revive and turn green again when it rains.

Still necessary to water? Soak deeply to 1" per week.

AND THERE IS PEST CONTROL:

Planting native and diverse species provides natural resistance to pests and disease. This is also true for turf grass seed mixtures that are balanced for Maine climates.

Balanced nutrients produce healthy disease resistant plants able to ward off pests and disease infestations. Amend with compost when necessary.

Use biological controls, i.e. beneficial ladybeetles and nematodes, when needed.